United Nations S/2000/537

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 June 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 5 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing on instructions from my Government to seize the Security Council of today's attack on our troops by Ugandan troops in Kisangani this morning.

The shelling occurred as the last troops of the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) in Kisangani assembled at the designated centre to begin the withdrawal from Zone II in the city. The heavy shelling started when they were waiting for their counterparts in order to finalize their disengagement under international supervision from Kisangani as previously agreed. Ugandan troops shelled Rwandan troops, allegedly for the following reasons:

1. A Ugandan vehicle was ambushed and shot at by what Uganda alleged to be a Rwandan, without any evidence to substantiate the false accusation.

2. Ugandan soldiers at the Joint Command Centre (JCC) were allegedly surrounded by Rwandan troops. How can Rwandan troops surround Ugandan troops when both are within the JCC and operating together?

3. Uganda also accused Rwanda of lagging behind the schedule to withdraw, and yet all know that Uganda has so far taken eight days to not yet do what the Rwanda troops did in two days as agreed!

4. Interestingly enough, Uganda did this "to punish Rwanda for meeting President Kabila over the weekend in Kenya without Uganda's consent or in their presence"!

Mr. President, Uganda should be seriously condemned for yet again starting this incident and warned against further such actions taking place. Instead of moving their forces as agreed, Uganda has been doing the reverse. Between where Ugandans allege that their vehicle was ambushed and where our forces were waiting for them to meet, there is a distance of about 15 kilometres. How can our troops ambush them without any Rwandan soldier on the road that the Ugandans were travelling on? And how come within 20 minutes of the shooting of the vehicle, Ugandan troops had already moved tanks and other heavy artillery guns in the city again to start shelling Rwandan troops? Please also note that Mr. Wamba dia Wamba and Mr. Jean Pierre Bemba were both in Kampala, waiting to be flown over to Kisangani to politically take over the city, according to very reliable intelligence sources.

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All signs show that Ugandan troops stage-managed the whole scenario once again to make people believe that they did not start the trouble. Rwanda is saddened by this unprovoked attack at a time when we all were looking forward to a wonderful solution to the Democratic Republic of the Congo crisis, as agreed with the Security Council delegation and Uganda last month and in the context of the Lusaka Agreement, which Rwanda is still committed to. Rwanda considers the Lusaka Agreement as the only viable framework for solving the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region.

The Government of Rwanda also wishes to see the United Nations observers on the field taking the right positions and action instead of trying to please the two sides or apportion blame. For instance, this morning, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was asking RPA troops for a ceasefire when the Rwandan troops were under attack and trying to take cover! This is absolutely not the right thing to say or do. Our forces also have a right to defend themselves, albeit while still committed to agreements signed earlier on and to the withdrawal of our troops, as initiated by us and agreed with our partners, including the Security Council delegation that was visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

The Government of Rwanda strongly wishes to see the Security Council doing its level best to increase the number of United Nations observers in Kisangani and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in general to make sure that things go as smoothly as planned and to stop Uganda from provoking further trouble. We would appreciate it if the Security Council would meet and consider this matter urgently.

(*Signed*) Joseph W. **Mutaboba**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Rwanda